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The U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee

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The U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee

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History of the Committee

The appropriating power of Congress rests upon the authority conferred by Article 1, section 9, of the U.S. Constitution: "No Money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in Consequence of Appropriations made by Law; and a regular Statement and Account of the Receipts and Expenditures of all public Money shall be published from time to time."

The Founding Fathers placed ultimate control over funds in the hands of those who were directly responsible to the people. James Madison wrote, "This power over the purse may, in fact, be regarded as the most complete and effectual weapon with which any constitution can arm the immediate representatives of the people, for obtaining a redress of every grievance, and for carrying into effect every just and salutary measure."

From the Senate's earliest years through the end of the Civil War, the Senate Finance Committee handled most appropriations, but it did so without system or discipline. The Civil War vastly expanded and complicated federal spending. The lack of centralized control in the Senate, tolerable in an earlier era, now worked to the Senate's disadvantage in its relations with the executive branch. No less than the power of the purse was at stake.

To reform the appropriations process, the Senate on March 6, 1867 created a separate Committee on Appropriations. This seven-member panel rapidly became a Senate powerhouse. Today the committee is composed of 29 members, making it the largest committee of the Senate. With the assistance of 13 subcommittees, it is responsible for allocating more than three-quarter trillion dollars in federal funds among various government programs, agencies, and departments.

Recent Chairmen of the Committee

Ted Stevens
(R–AK)
Chairman 2003–Present
and 1997–2001

Ted Stevens has been a member of the committee for more than 30 years. He was born in Indiana on November 18, 1923. Before World War II he attended Oregon State College in 1942. During World War II, his service as a pilot in the China-Burma-India theater won him many combat decorations. Following the war, Stevens graduated from UCLA and Harvard Law School, and practiced law in Washington, D.C. In the early 1950s, he moved to Alaska, at that time a territory of the United States. He practiced law in Fairbanks and subsequently was appointed U.S. attorney in Fairbanks. Commencing in 1956, Stevens served in the Department of the Interior as legislative counsel and then as an assistant to Secretary of the Interior Fred Seaton. In 1960, he was appointed Solicitor (chief counsel) of the Department of the Interior by President Eisenhower. In 1961 he returned to Anchorage to practice law and in 1964 began serving the first of two

consecutive terms in the Alaska State House of Representatives. In 1968, Stevens began his service in the U.S. Senate. From 1977 to 1985, he served as assistant Republican leader. He has also chaired the Senate committees on Rules and Administration, Governmental Affairs, and Ethics, and the Defense Appro-priations Subcommittee. He currently serves as the Chairman of the Joint Committee on the Library of Congress and is the President Pro Tempore.

Robert Carlyle Byrd
(D–WV)
Chairman 2001–2003
and 1989–1995

Robert C. Byrd is the longest-serving member of the Senate Appropriations Committee; he joined the panel at the start of his Senate service in 1959. Byrd was born in North Carolina on November 20, 1917. He attended Beckley College, Concord College, Morris Harvey College, and Marshall College, all in West Virginia, and George Washington University Law School. He graduated from American University Law School, cum laude, in 1963, and from Marshall University, summa cum laude, in 1994. During World War II, Byrd worked as a welder building naval ships in Baltimore, Maryland, and Tampa, Florida. After the war he was elected to the West Virginia house of delegates and to the state senate, and in 1952 he won election to the U.S. House of Representatives, where he served for three terms until his election to the U.S. Senate in 1958. In the Senate, Byrd has held all major leadership positions, including secretary of the Democratic Conference, majority whip, majority leader, minority leader, and president pro tempore.

Mark Odom Hatfield (R–OR)
Chairman 1995–1997 and 1981–1987

Born in Oregon on July 12, 1922, Mark Hatfield earned his undergraduate degree from Willamette University in 1943 and a graduate degree from Stanford University in 1948. He served in the U.S. Navy during World War II, and was one of the first U.S. military personnel to enter Hiroshima after the atomic bomb was dropped in 1945. In the 1950s, Hatfield taught political science at Willamette University, and served as a state representative, state senator, secretary of state, and—from 1959 to 1967—governor of Oregon. He began his 30-year U.S. Senate career in 1967 and joined the Appropriations Committee in 1972. After retiring from the Senate in 1997, he resumed his teaching career at several home-state universities.

John Cornelius Stennis (D–MS)
Chairman 1987–1989

John C. Stennis was born in Mississippi on August 3, 1901. He received his undergraduate degree from Mississippi State College in 1923 and his law degree from the University of Virginia in 1928. In the two decades before he entered the U.S. Senate in 1947, Stennis served in the Mississippi house of representatives, and then as district prosecuting attorney and circuit judge. He won an appointment to the Committee on Appropriations in 1955 and became

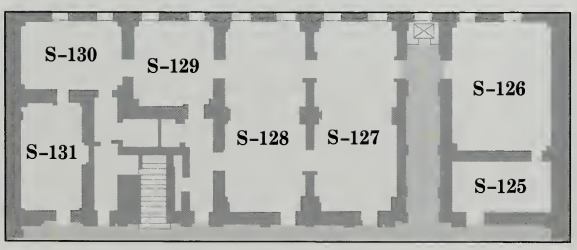
chairman 32 years later. Stennis also served as president pro tempore of the Senate from 1987 to 1989. He retired to Mississippi in 1989 and died there in 1995.

Warren Grant Magnuson (D–WA)
Chairman 1978–1981

Warren Magnuson was born in Minnesota on April 12, 1905. He moved to Washington state where he earned his undergraduate degree in 1926 and a law degree in 1929 from the University of Washington. In the 1930s, Magnuson served as county prosecuting attorney and as a member of the state house of representatives. Following service in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1937 to 1944, he began his 36-year career in the U.S. Senate. He took a seat on the Appropriations Committee in 1953 and chaired the Senate Commerce Committee from 1955 to 1978, when he relinquished that post to lead the Appropriations Committee. Magnuson also served as president pro tempore of the Senate from 1979 to 1980. He left the Senate in 1981, resumed the practice of law, and died in 1989.

History of the Committee Rooms

The Senate Appropriations Committee's suite of offices is perhaps the most elegant of all Senate or

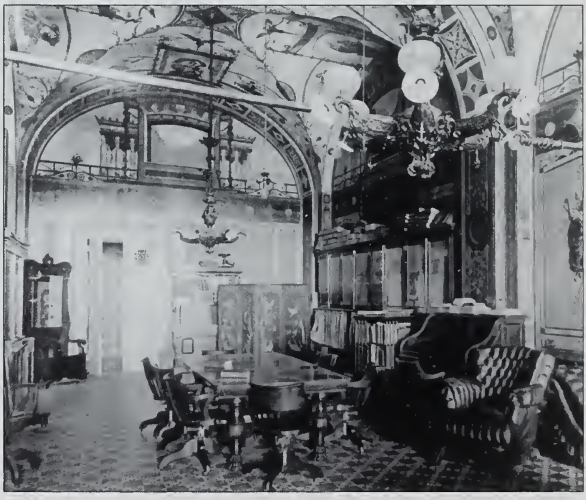


Floor plan of Appropriations Committee Suite

House committee quarters. The seven rooms span the west side of the first floor in the Senate wing of the U.S. Capitol; the wing was built in the 1850s to accommodate the growing legislature. In 1911 the Appropriations Committee moved from second-floor quarters into these rooms, first occupying rooms S–127, 128, and 129, and eventually expanding into adjacent rooms S–125, 126, 130, and 131.

Constantino Brumidi, ca. 1866

Much of the mural painting in the suite is the work of artist Constantino Brumidi, who had experience as a fresco painter in Rome. Brumidi prepared designs, supervised the decoration, and painted murals in many parts of the Capitol from 1855 until his death in 1880. While trained in the Renaissance tradition of Michelangelo and Raphael, Brumidi integrated national themes into



Room S–127 when used by the Senate Committee on the Philippines, ca. 1900

Brumidi was inspired by these murals excavated at Pompeii in painting room S–127

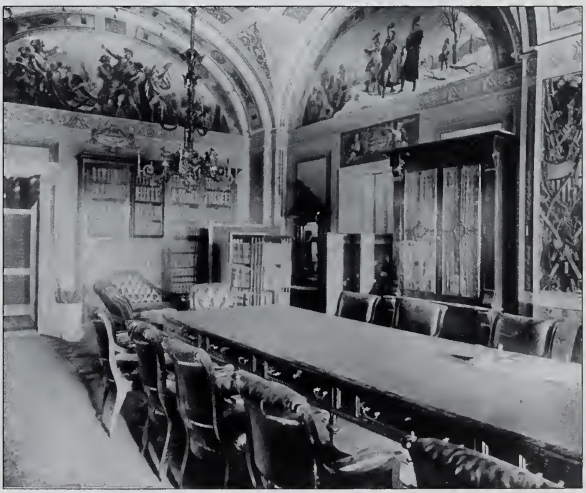
his classical repertoire, making the images in the Capitol uniquely American. His designs also reflected the use of the room, as can be seen throughout the Appropriations suite.

S–127. The main committee room was first occupied by the Committee on Naval Affairs, and the art reflects a naval theme. The decoration is in a style derived from ancient Roman wall paintings in the Baths of Titus and the excavations of Pompeii. As originally designed by Brumidi, the walls were to be filled with depictions of U.S. naval battles in illusionistic porticoes. Because of dissatisfaction with the artists who were to have carried out the work, only one scene was completed. The highly ornate ceiling as executed by Brumidi and his assistants is painted in fresco and tempera. Seven Roman gods and goddesses of the sea, together with America in the form of a Native American woman, dominate the room. Interspersed throughout are scenes of mermaids, centaurs, eagles, Native Americans, and settlers. The walls depict classical maidens in flowing robes with various naval instruments. Other original details in the room include the marble mantel, gilded mirror, and wooden shutters. The central chandelier, originally gas-burning

and purchased in 1873 for the White House, was later acquired for the Capitol and modified for electricity. The room's other dominant features include a rich red carpet in a pattern studded with gold stars, and a 30-foot conference table at which each committee member has a designated place.

S–128. A fresco entitled *Bellona, the Roman Goddess of War* is located over the main entrance to the suite, reflecting the room's original use by the Committee on Military Affairs.

The room itself was decorated over a 15-year period by Brumidi and English artist James Leslie; Brumidi painted the lunettes with Revolutionary War scenes—*The Boston Massacre, 1770; The Battle of Lexington* (1775)*; Death of General Wooster, 1777; Washington at Valley Forge, 1778;* and *Storming of Stony Point, 1779*—while Leslie painted the pilasters with elaborate military arms representing different historical periods. The ornate gilded valances and mirror over the marble mantel are also decorated with military accouterments. In a eulogy to Brumidi, shortly after his



Room S–128 when used by the Senate Committee on Military Affairs, ca. 1900

The Battle of Lexington, S–128

death, Senator Daniel Voorhees of Indiana praised the decorations and reflected: "Who ever passed through the room of the Committee on Military Affairs without the feeling that the very genius of heroism had left there its immortal aspirations?"

The elaborate floor tiles were manufactured by Minton, Hollins and Company of Stoke-Upon-Trent, England. Despite nearly 150 years of service, the tiles remain in excellent condition due to a unique "encaustic" tile-making process that used layers of colored clay embedded in a neutral clay base to enhance color and durability.

S–129. The smaller room to the south of S–128 was assigned to the Committee on the Library at the time Brumidi painted the ceiling frescoes in 1875. The frescoes show allegorical figures of science, architecture, sculpture, and painting. After the ceiling was completed, the walls of the room remained undecorated for many years. It was not until 1910 that Carl Rakemann, whose father had worked with Brumidi, completed the decoration of the room. Since the room was used by the Military Affairs Committee at the time he worked on it, Rakemann chose a motif in keeping with the adjoining reception room, painting the four lunettes with portraits of outstanding Revolutionary War generals and historic flags. George Washington, Joseph Warren, Anthony Wayne and Horatio Gates are depicted in each of the rooms four lunettes.

Authority Consults the Written Law, a fresco over the door to S–131

S–125, 126, 130, 131. Four less elaborately decorated rooms complete the committee's suite. These include S–125 and 126, both used for decades by the Committee on the Judiciary before being transferred to Appropriations in 1947. Rooms S–130 and 131 were once assigned to the Senate majority leader. A lunette over the door into S–131 depicts the fresco, *Authority Consults the Written Law,* designed by Brumidi for the Committee on Revision of the Laws, which occupied the room at the time. In September 1996 the Senate designated S–131 as the "Mark Hatfield Room," in honor of the former committee chairman.

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* From January 3 to January 20, 2001, with the Senate divided evenly between the two parties, the Democrats held the majority due to the deciding vote of outgoing Democratic Vice President Al Gore. Beginning on January 20, 2001, Republican Vice President Richard Cheney held the deciding vote, giving the majority to the Republicans. On May 24, 2001, Senator James Jeffords of Vermont announced his switch from Republican to Independent status, effective June 6, 2001. Jeffords announced that he would caucus with the Democrats, giving the Democrats a one-seat advantage, changing control of the Senate from the Republicans back to the Democrats for the remainder of the 107th Congress.

Chairmen of the Committee

Name	Party/State	Dates of Service
Lot Morrill	(R–ME)	1867–1869
William Pitt Fessenden	(R–ME)	1869
Lot Morrill	(R–ME)	1869–1871
Cornelius Cole	(R–CA)	1871–1873
Lot Morrill	(R–ME)	1873–1876
William Windom	(R–MN)	1876–1879
Henry Davis	(D–WV)	1879–1881
William Allison	(R–IA)	1881–1893
Francis Cockrell	(D–MO)	1893–1895
William Allison	(R–IA)	1896–1908
Eugene Hale	(R–ME)	1909–1911
Francis E. Warren	(R–WY)	1911–1913
Thomas S. Martin	(D–VA)	1913–1919
Francis E. Warren	(R–WY)	1919–1929
Wesley L. Jones	(R–WA)	1930–1932
Frederick Hale	(R–ME)	1932–1933
Carter Glass	(D–VA)	1933–1946
Kenneth McKellar	(D–TN)	1946–1947
Styles Bridges	(R–NH)	1947–1949
Kenneth McKellar	(D–TN)	1949–1953
Styles Bridges	(R–NH)	1953–1955
Carl Hayden	(D–AZ)	1955–1969
Richard B. Russell	(D–GA)	1969–1971
Allen J. Ellender	(D–LA)	1971–1972
John L. McClellan	(D–AR)	1972–1977
Warren G. Magnuson	(D–WA)	1978–1981
Mark O. Hatfield	(R–OR)	1981–1987
John C. Stennis	(D–MS)	1987–1989
Robert C. Byrd	(D–WV)	1989–1995
Mark O. Hatfield	(R–OR)	1995–1997
Ted Stevens	(R–AK)	1997–2001
Robert C. Byrd	(D–WV)	1/3 to 1/20/2001*
Ted Stevens	(R–AK)	1/20 to 6/6/2001*
Robert C. Byrd	(D–WV)	6/6/2001–2003*
Ted Stevens	(R–AK)	2003–Present

On the cover: Senate Appropriations Committee hearing room, S–127, courtesy Architect of the Capitol

The Ixion Room, Pompeii, © Alinari/Art Resource, NY

The Battle of Lexington, Authority Consults the Written Law, and historic views of rooms S–127 and S–128, courtesy Architect of the Capitol

Constantino Brumidi, courtesy Library of Congress

Senators Hatfield, Stennis, and Magnuson, courtesy Senate Historical Office

Prepared under the direction of the Secretary of the Senate by the Senate Historical Office and Office of Senate Curator

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